

WASHINGTON, DC – A NOAA scientist, Dr. Bill Lehr, yesterday told a group of Congressional staff investigators on a conference call that a controversial National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report claiming that nearly three-quarters of the oil from the Gulf oil spill has already been addressed was released by White House officials and not scientists at NOAA. The NOAA scientist told congressional investigators that the data backing up the assertions made in the report is still unavailable and that peer review of the report is still not complete. Officials at an August 4 White House press briefing had said that the report had been thoroughly peer reviewed.

“This is yet another in a long line of examples where the White House’s pre-occupation with the public relations of the oil spill has superseded the realities on the ground. It is deeply troubling that White House officials apparently preempted the completion and review of a scientific study on the oil spill by NOAA scientists in order to tout conclusions that many experts believe may be deeply flawed,” said Rep. Issa referring to an August 4 White House press briefing focused on the report. “This irresponsible action only adds to the perception that the Obama White House is more concerned about appearing competent than actually making sure the massive oil spill in the Gulf gets cleaned-up as quickly as possible. I will certainly be demanding the White House name those responsible for releasing this report, why it was released before it was complete, and whether its controversial conclusions have led to changes in Gulf clean-up efforts.”

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